RESTORATION REVIEW

NEUROTIC GUILT IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint;
My heart is like wax, it is melted within my breast;
My strength is dried up like a potsherd,
and my tongue cleaves to my jaws;
thou dost lay me in the dust of death.

—Psalms 22

Volume 6, No. 5 **May, 1964**

Volume 6, No. 5 **Leroy Garrett, Editor** **May 1964**

OUT OF THE HORSE'S MOUTH

Some 350 years ago Francis Bacon told a story that continues to live because it gets so close to the lives of us all. It may even have relevance to the problems of the modern church.

There was a grievous quarrel among the brethren over the number of teeth in the mouth of a horse. For 13 days the dispute raged without ceasing. The ancient books and chronicles were fetched out, and wonderful and ponderous erudition, such as was never before heard of in the region, was made manifest. Finally a youthful friar of goodly bearing asked his learned superiors for permission to add a word, and straightway, to the wonderment of the disputants, whose deep wisdom he sore vexed, he beseeched them to unbend in a manner coarse and unheard of, and to look in the open mouth of a horse and find the answer to their question.

At this, their dignity being grievously hurt, they waxed exceedingly wroth; and, joining in a mighty uproar they flew upon him and smote him hip and thigh, and cast him out forthwith, For, said they, surely Satan hath tempted this bold neophyte to declare unholy and unheard of ways of finding truth contrary to all the teachings of the fathers.

After many days more of grievous strife the dove of peace sat on the assembly, and they as one man, declaring the problem to be an everlasting mystery because of a grievous dearth of historical and theological evidence thereof, so ordered the same writ down.

This is the story of orthodoxy, which is repeated over and over in every field of human endeavor. Orthodoxy is stereotyped and unteachable. It always struggles to defend and preserve itself, and it considers anything different as a threat to its existence. It cannot "look into the horse's mouth" because it has never done it that way. Anyone who suggests a new method or a different approach or a contrary interpretation is treated forthwith as an enemy. Orthodoxy has already arrived; change is therefore out of the question. It is presumption to raise questions. Freedom means that one is at liberty to believe and behave the way approved by the party or institution. Freedom does not and cannot mean that one

is free to look into the horse's mouth — or even to suggest it. Such "horsing around" always gets one into trouble, if not the cross perhaps the hemlock.

"Test everything; hold fast what is good." (1 Thess. 5:21) — *The Editor*

EDUCATION AS SELF-CRITICISM

On my trip around the world last summer I was able to look at education from a different perspective: *as a foreigner looking in from the outside at educational systems around the world.* The systems were of course, greatly different, and yet both the problems and possibilities are strikingly similar despite the cultural diversities.

Human nature is no different in Japan than it is in America, and the emotions, drives, instincts, and behavior of the Vietnamese are much the same as those of Texans. The problems of learning that we seek to solve in our psychology classes are not essentially different from the attempts made in the Middle East or in Europe. Some countries, are of course, more advanced in pedagogical know-how, and some have better tools with which to work, but the problems are always the same.

Modern man supposes that his world is more complex and his problems more involved, but this is only a conjecture. Life thousands of years ago may have been as complex as our own, perhaps even more so. Learning to build a log cabin was just as involved a problem to people of yesteryear as building a spaceship is to us. The invention of barbed wire was as vital to the culture of its time as the mechanized cotton-picker is to ours.

This means that the real problems of life and education are not so much a matter of log cabins, spaceships, barbed wire, and cotton-pickers, but of *understanding.* And understanding begins with self. This is why I say that the real problem of education the world over is man himself. Despite all of our science and technology it is doubtful that we are any closer to the answers to the great questions that man has been asking for centuries: Who am I? What is my mission in this world? What is my destiny? Is the universe friendly? What is the good life?

Has the human race made any real progress the past few centuries? Some thinkers like Rheinhold Niebuhr contend that the notion that we have made great progress in our age of science is sheer fiction. Man still does not know how to live either with himself or with others. He still does not understand himself. Even in our space age nations cannot trust each other.

These are real educational issues in any country. This being the case, we can always pause to ask if it might not be true that some other nations are getting at these problems better than we are. Is a person really educated who does not know how to get along with others, even if he does live in a push-button culture? Is one truly educated who has not yet

experienced the spiritual forces in himself and the universe, even if he has a college degree and drives a high-powered automobile to his office in a skyscraper made of tinted glass?

In places like Taiwan most of the people I met appeared to be freer of anxiety than most of us are, and it seemed that life makes more sense to them than it does to us. They have more of a feel of history and a continuity with the past. Even more important, they know a lot about how to live with each other. Life is much less rushed. Surely life has its many complicated problems to them just as to all peoples, but they seem to be able to roll with the punches so much better than the most of us.

So who is "backward" after all? It all depends on what kind of values you measure by. Socrates argued that "The unexamined life is not worth living." If that is as true in 1964 as it was in the time of Socrates, then the lives of so many of us are not worth living.

In any part of the world education could well be viewed as the discipline and experience of self-criticism. Chuang Tzu, a Chinese philosopher, saw self-discipline as the ability to follow others without losing self. This loss of individuality is rapidly becoming a mark of our own culture. Mencius, another Chinese sage, viewed self-discipline and criticism as the means of preserving the feelings of goodness that are innate in man. Goodness means compassion, he taught, and this means a feeling of responsibility for the suffering of others.

Mencius insisted that education does not and cannot produce these feelings of goodness, for they are inborn, but education must nurture and safeguard them. These feelings can be lost through "the rough contacts of daily life," so it is the responsibility of education to provide the kind of environment in which the best in man can thrive.

A university is to encourage the free spirit of inquiry, which implies first of all self inquiry. To do this a university must be critical of itself. There should always be dialogue going on in which strengths and weaknesses of an educational institution are canvassed. It is pride that resents criticism.

I recall from my days at Harvard, which is probably the freest institution in the world, that a severe barrage of criticism was leveled against the university. There were charges of all descriptions, but especially having to do with the political left-wing. Where did I see these criticisms, blazing in boldface type? On a bulletin-board at Harvard! That was a great lesson to me. Here was an educational institution under attack by its enemies posting the criticisms for all to read and judge for themselves. The willingness to listen to criticism is one reason why Harvard has become great, and I am certain that neither an educational institution nor an individual can move toward greatness without this kind of self-criticism.

A biblical definition of education touches these points:

"And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man." (Luke 2:52)

No man becomes truly wise, in whatever country, who does not understand himself and his mission in life. And no man gains the favor of either God or man who cannot judge himself by the same standards that he judges others. — *The Editor*

William James defined the free mind as one that can: (1) imagine foreign states of mind, (2) always see alternatives, (3) make conventionalities fluid, (4) involve oneself creatively in the lives of others.

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

THE ABOLITION OF THE LAITY

(Delivered at First Christian Church, Denton, Texas; Laymen's Sunday, October 20, 1963)

"As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace." (I Peter 4:10)

The title of my remarks may strike you as a strange one, if not contradictory. Why should one speak on the *abolition* of the laity at anytime, especially on "Laymen's Sunday." Understand that I am not speaking on the abolition of "Laymen's Sunday," for if we are to have laymen we may as well have a Sunday for them. Rather I am advocating the abolition of the laity. "Laymen's Sunday" not only serves to remind us that we make such distinctions as clergy and laity, but also it gives us opportunity to reevaluate such distinctions.

Since the days of Martin Luther and our own Alexander Campbell important effort has been made to recapture the New Testament concept of "the priesthood of all believers." This effort has tended to dim the distinction between clergy and laity, and it has led some reformers to call for an abolition of the clergy completely. A consciousness of "the priesthood of all believers" has not only inspired an anti-clericalism in many Christian circles, but has also given new impetus to lay activity in the church.

The priesthood of all believers; however, means more than an anti-clericalism or a re-emergence of the laity. It may be expressed as an abolition of the very idea of laity. The point struck me forcefully in a recent conversation I had with a Quaker. Knowing that the Quakers do not have a professional ministry, I said to my friend, "In order to restore to the church the New Testament concept of ministry we may have to do away with the clergy." He replied without hesitation, "Oh, no, it isn't the clergy that we need to do away with. It is the laity that must be abolished." This is perhaps the best way to get at the truth that every Christian is a minister, or *clergy*, if you like, for the word *clergy* refers to God's *lot*

(or *heritage*, 1 Pet. 5:3), those that are set apart to serve him. We should have no laity, for in a very important sense we are all in the Christian ministry.

If you are a baptized believer, then you are a minister of Christ! It may surprise you or alarm you, antagonize you or please you, but you are a Christian minister just the same. Paul could say to you what he said to Archippus in Col. 4:17: "See that you fulfil the ministry which you have received in the Lord." This is the meaning of 1 Pet. 4:10: "As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace."

"As each has received a gift . . . " Each of us is capable of serving God in some special way. It is a mistake to suppose that one must "enter the ministry" or become an "ordained" preacher before he can be a minister of Christ. Can there be any calling of God more meaningful than wifehood and motherhood? The Christian woman is surely God's minister, not merely because she rocks the cradle, but because she nurtures the human spirit. And so with the Christian father. In his poem *The Cotter's Saturday Night* Robert Burns refers to the "priestly father" who says to his family as night falls over their humble home like a protective blanket, "Let us worship God," a phrase that deeply impressed the Scottish bard.

> The priest-like father reads the sacred page. . .
>
> Then kneeling down to heaven's Eternal King
>
> The saint, the father, and husband prays . . .

The poet describes how the family congregation "together hymns their Creator's praise," and then by way of contrast shows the superficiality of the pompous religious ceremony that then characterized the churches of his native Scotland?

> Compared with this, how poor Religion's pride,
>
> In all the pomp of method and of art,
>
> When men display to congregations wide
>
> Devotion's every grace, except the heart!
>
> The Power, incensed, the pageant will desert,
>
> The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole;
>
> But haply, in some cottage far apart,
>
> May hear, well pleased, the language of the soul,
>
> And in His book of life the inmates poor enrol.

The time was in our own fair land that family devotions were as common as TV parleys now are. Oh, how we need to restore the family altar! There is no higher ministry than for a man to gather his family around an open Bible and teach them the word of God.

The poet Burns is right: the father who trains his children in Christian morality is as much a priest as any man who ever donned a sacerdotal stole. Likewise the mother who trains her daughter in Christian grace and chastity is as much a minister as any man who ever stood in a pulpit.

One reason we fail to see the vast areas of Christian ministry is our secularization of knowledge. We err in supposing that some truth is secular while other truth is divine. This fallacy was impressed upon me just last week when a devout neighbor collared me about a letter I had written to the editor of the Denton *Record-Chronicle,* in which I referred to the Bible, Jefferson, Lincoln, Franklin, and Greek philosophers as important sources of moral training. She wanted to know why I would place such "secular" sources as Thomas Jefferson and philosophers alongside the Bible.

I asked her if it were not true that God is the source of all truth. She agreed that He was. "Then if Jefferson learned any truth, whether about morality or political science, would this not be the truth of God?" I asked her. She wasn't so sure about that. "Is not mathematics of God? Is He not the author of numbers? As we learn more about our world, outer space and the universe, are we not learning more about God and His work?" The neighbor's fallacy is that she thinks of the Bible as "spiritual" or "divine" truth, while all else is "secular" and therefore of less consequence if to be trusted at all. History is like wise divided into *sacred* and *profane,* as if to suggest that God had a hand in the history of Israel but not in the history of Europe or America.

I explained to my religious friend that there are different kinds of truth, though all truth is of God. The Bible reveals to us certain truths that are vital to the redemption and nurture of the spirit of man, its special purpose being to reveal the image of God through the Person of Christ. Every Christian is to be a minister of these truths, teaching everyone he can the great principles of the, sacred scriptures. The heart of the Bible is the gospel, and all of us are ministers of that gospel.

But there are other truths and principles that God has given us for the good of society, whether they be political, nutritional, educational, agricultural, scientific, economical — and those who minister in behalf of these truths are also ministers of God. Whether one tills the ground, teaches school, runs a machine, or manages a home, he or she is doing a work that God wants done. This must be what the Bible is talking about when it says: "Let those who have believed in God be careful to apply themselves to honorable occupations, for these are excellent and profitable to men," (Tit. 3:8) If one cannot believe that what he is doing is what God wants him to do, perhaps he should not be doing it.

The Bible speaks of the "governing authorities" as being of God, for the state is an institution of God. In so many words it says that "the (political) authorities are ministers of God" (Rom. 13:6). It says that this is the reason we are to pay taxes! To be sure, all God's ministers are not faithful ones, whether they occupy pulpits or a royal throne, but they are

His ministers none the less and are responsible to Him for their conduct, as we all are in the use we make of the gift that He has given us.

Alexander Campbell had a way of speaking of "three books" in which God reveals himself to man: *the book of Nature*, which involves the entire universe, and here God speaks to us through biology, physics and chemistry; *the book of Human Nature*, which is man himself and his relations with other men, and here we have psychology, philosophy, sociology and history; *the Bible*, which is God's special revelation as to how man is to be conformed to the image of his Maker.

All these areas of knowledge are of God, and he who ministers the truths gleaned by these disciplines should do so as unto God, as a faithful minister of the Ruler of the Universe. This means he will not "secularize" knowledge, supposing it to be separate from spiritual or religious truth. He will understand that all truth, having the same source in God, is interrelated, and that it is a harmonious whole. The facts of science do not contradict the truths of the Bible. They are two threads of the same seamless garment, two aspects of God. The work of scientists like Copernicus and Galileo, who opened up for us an entirely different view of our universe, may be as much to the glory of God as the work of translators of the Scriptures like Wycliffe and Tyndale, who opened up for us the Bible in our own vernacular. The more a man knows about himself and the world in which he lives the abler he is to understand the Bible as the word of God. Knowledge begets knowledge.

There should be no place for anti-intellectualism in the church, even though we must avoid the *worship* of knowledge. We should desire for our people the highest level of education possible, for the right kind of education not only makes one *wiser*, but also *better.* Ignorance is a blight on any people, and those who are engaged in the fight against ignorance are important ministers of God. The same is true of those who labor to free society of disease, poverty, hunger, and tyranny. These holy ministries are as vital to the church as to the world.

When we succeed in abolishing the laity and start thinking of every member of the church as a minister, then motherhood, farming, merchandising, and dentistry will be considered "callings of God" as well as preaching. And what a difference this would make in our attitude towards our work! Some years ago a New York preacher addressed his church on the unusual theme "Going to work for God on Monday morning!" It was such a revolutionary idea that it changed the lives of some of the working people. Work is not drudgery to the man who believes he is doing what God wants him to do, and that he is doing it for God. One's job can be a joyful experience if he can see it as part of God's plan for a better world. Our mission is to build a sane world through the alleviation of human suffering and ignorance, by saving lost souls, by bringing hope and peace to our troubled

world. Those who dedicate themselves to the cause of “peace on earth and goodwill towards men” certainly have a sacred ministry.

This emphasis upon a broader view of the ministry does not mean that every Christian does not also have responsibility of ministering the gospel. The Lord never intended that the preaching of the gospel be placed in the hands of a professional clergy. History indicates that professional priests have never been successful in taking the gospel to the masses. In all those instances in which the church was effective in reaching the rank and file with the gospel, it was the ordinary men and women who performed the ministry. In one of his recent books, Harry Emerson Fosdick put it this way:

In recovering Christianity as a layman’s religion we are getting back to the place where Christianity started. Neither Jesus nor any of His disciples were members of the priesthood or the clergy. They were laymen, all of them. The Master, a layman Himself, talked nothing but layman’s language. Moreover, early Christianity was spread across the Roman Empire, not by clergymen, but by laymen who translated the gospel into terms of daily life.

Robert W. Burns concluded his term as president of the International Convention of Christian Churches at the recent Miami meeting with these words:

I come to the close of this year of general service deeply concerned about the quality of Christian experience in each of us and the welfare of the cause we love.

What are we fighting against today? Not simply against the obvious evils of communism, resurgent nationalism, injustice in any form anywhere, but our own worst selves, our divided loyalties, our half-hearted service to Christ, our indifference.

“Our half-hearted service to Christ . . .” ”Our indifference . . .” “Our own worst selves . . .” These are the barriers that face us in our attempt to retrieve the idea of the priesthood of all believers. Unlike our Lord who came to this world “not to be ministered to, but to minister,” we have become a people who must be entertained by the refined oratory of brilliant preachers, and then we criticize the preachers!

In a scholarly treatment on *Ministry* and *Priesthood*, T. W. Manson of the University of Manchester in England, refers to the influence of the ordinary Christian as compared to that of the “brilliant preachers” in the Early Church:

The Christianity that conquered the Roman Empire was not an affair of brilliant preachers addressing packed congregations. We have, so far as I know, nothing much in the way of brilliant preachers in the first three hundred years of the Church’s life . . .

The great preachers came after Constantine the Great; and before that Christianity had already done its work and made its way right through the Empire from end to end. When we try to picture how it was done we seem to see domestic servants teaching Christ in and through their domestic service, workers doing it through their work, small shopkeepers

through their trade, and so on, rather than eloquent propagandists swaying mass meetings of interested inquirers.

You see, they had no "laity" then, for all the Christians were ministers! Prof. Manson goes on in his study of the ministry of the early church to point out that it was *the convincing power of the lived life* that won people to the Christ, not well-articulated sermons.

The greatest source of power in this church, or any other church, is not in the pulpit, but in the lives of its members. If we love God with all our personality, if we are indeed filled with the fruit of the Spirit —- "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control — our lives cannot help but be a testimony of God's grace. If we are truly people of the Spirit rather than of the world, if we are indeed *Christian* rather than secular in our affections, then our influence for good in this community should be sensational. The church *ought* to be the most vital, dynamic moral and spiritual force in this city. But such force can be realized only as the Spirit of God flows through our lives into the lives of others.

There is the possibility that we are more pagan than we are Christian. If the purpose of Christianity is to conform men to the image of Christ, it looks as if we have failed miserably, for the church is more like the world than it is like Christ — not that Christianity has failed, but we have failed Christianity. If the church continues to be little more than a service club, if it becomes more and more like the world around it — conforming to the world rather than transforming it — then the role it is to play in this dangerous nuclear age will be a superficial one.

There are no easy answers to the problem of a decadent Christianity. But surely *a converted church* is part of the answer! If the members of this church would begin each day with the Christ, continue each day with the Christ, and end each day with the Christ, what a difference it would make.

Suppose Jesus of Nazareth were in Denton, Texas, today. What would he do? How would he live? What would his interests be? Those who claim to be his disciples should not be so different from what he would be. Jesus would be in Denton to *serve,* not to be served, to *minister,* not to be ministered to. Once we sense this high calling to the ministry, such talk as "Let the minister do it, that's what we pay him for" will end, for we will then be sensitive to the face that the Christ continues to minister to this desperate world through all of us who are his disciples.

The ideal that God envisaged for his people back in the time of Moses will then be realized:

"You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." (1 Pet. 2:9) — *The Editor*

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

A UNITY PLEA SPELLED OUT

A few of our readers have written to us to the effect that our statements on fellowship, brotherhood, and unity are vague and unclear. For instance, what do we mean when we say that the Lordship of Christ is the only basis of fellowship? What does this lordship entail? And what do we mean by saying that it is the Person of Christ that is the pattern rather than a book? If we reject the idea that we have a minute and detailed pattern in the New Testament scriptures for the work and worship of the church, then what *is* the criterion for the modern *ecclesia?* And just what is the place of the Bible in all this?

Moreover, we are asked about the nature of the united church that we envisage. If we base brotherhood simply upon the profession that "Jesus is Lord," what kind of church will result from such a plea?

These are important questions, and we wish to deal with them as briefly and pointedly as possible, trusting that we might avoid vagueness.

By accepting the Lordship of Christ we mean what Paul meant in Rom. 10:9-10: "If on your lips is the confession, 'Jesus is Lord,' and in your heart the faith that God raised him from the dead, then you will find salvation. For the faith that leads to righteousness is in the heart, and the confession that leads to salvation is upon the lips." And we mean what Peter meant in Acts 2:36: "Let all Israel then accept as certain that God has made this Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Messiah."

The point of Jesus' lordship in our lives is best made by Peter: "Have no fear of them: do not be perturbed, but hold the Lord Christ in reverence in your hearts". (1 Pet. 3:15)

Surely every person who reverences the Christ in his heart as Lord is my brother. He who professes the Christ as Lord is a Christian. Is this not what *Christian* means? Peter tells us that God made Jesus *both* the Lord and the Christ. It is not enough simply to acknowledge the messiahship of Jesus, for he must also be the Lord of one's heart. The Christian is the person in whose life Jesus rules as Lord.

The question that invariably arises among our people in this regard is: *doesn't one have to be immersed to be a Christian?*

The question is difficult due to the fact that many unimmersed people are surely among those who reverence Christ in their hearts as Lord." It appears safe to assume that such was not the case in the primitive *ecclesia*, for there was then no confusion as to either the purpose or the nature of baptism. All who professed the Christ as Lord were *immersed* believers. In our time this matter is confused by widespread misunderstanding and disagreement about baptism. Many who love Jesus and honor him as the Lord of their lives assume that they have been properly baptized who have not been immersed.

I regret that I am unable to be as certain on this matter as so many of our people are. Maybe it is vagueness, or it may be simply that I do not know as much as they, or it may be both. But I do not feel comfortable with the view that one who accepts Jesus as Lord of his life, and who lives that kind of life by bearing spiritual fruit, is not a Christian because he has not been immersed. There is, of course, quite obviously no question involved if one *rejects* anything taught by the Master, for that is not living under his Lordship. Neither is there any question that one who loves Jesus will obey him in all things according to his understanding, and that he will be immersed when he comes to understand that this is the Master's will for him.

But I suppose that the point is not yet clear. Some of my readers wish to press the point, which is perfectly all right, and so they ask: "Come now and make it clear, do you consider the devout Presbyterian elder, who has only been baptized by sprinkling, your brother in Christ; and would you accept him into the fellowship of your congregation?"

Yes, I consider him my brother in Christ, though I acknowledge that his obedience has not yet been perfected, which I assume will be the case when he comes to greater understanding. And I would certainly consider it my duty to share with him in the search for such light. But in the meantime I would accept him and treat him as a brother.

No, I would not accept him in any public way as a member of my congregation, were I am overseer in that congregation, until his obedience were perfected in immersion, according to scriptural teaching. I would explain the matter to him kindly, and I would urge the members to treat him as one who loves the same Lord. But because of my respect for what I believe to be clear teaching regarding the conditions for membership in a corporate body of saints, I could not conscientiously accept the unimmersed. As for his breaking bread with the congregation, I would prefer to leave that decision with him. I certainly would not debar him; neither would I discourage him.

You say now that I am inconsistent, for I will acknowledge the pious unimmersed as brothers in Christ and yet not accept them into a congregation of saints. Perhaps so, though I think there is an importance difference which I will not expand upon just now. I may be inconsistent (like Emerson I'm not overly concerned about trying to be consistent all the time) but at least I'm not vague this time!

As for the Christ being the pattern for the child of God instead of a book, meaning the Bible of course, I mean what Peter meant when he wrote: "To that you were called, because Christ suffered on your behalf, and thereby left you an example (pattern); it is for you to follow in his steps" (1 Pet. 2:21). The Christian's pattern is the Christ! We are to follow in his steps.

We are told that we have to have the New Testament scriptures in order to follow the Christ, and that they are therefore the pattern. But those to whom Peter wrote had very little of the book we call the New Testament, if any at all. They had the image of the Christ

before them, and Peter sought to tell them more about him ("He committed no sin, he was convicted of no falsehood; when he was abused he did not retort with abuse, when he suffered he uttered no threats, but committed his cause to the one who judges justly"), but it was always Jesus who was the pattern.

Lest we forget, the primitive disciples enjoyed fellowship with each other long before there was a book called the New Testament. Then how can we say that the Bible is the basis of fellowship? I say it is a *Person* that is the ground of fellowship. I do not accept a man as a fellow saint because of how much he knows about the Bible, or how closely he agrees to my interpretation of it, or even on the basis of how definitively he has obeyed all the teachings of the Bible (which would have to be according to *my* interpretation of course!), but I accept him because of his love for the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christ's love and acceptance of him.

What does this do to the Bible? Precisely nothing, for it remains what is has always been, but it might do havoc to some strange notions that some of us have long had about the Bible. The first thing to settle is whether or not the Bible makes any claims for itself as *the pattern for Christian brotherhood.* Let him who thinks it is a book that is *the pattern,* however minute and detailed, open his Bible to the place that indicates such. He will never do it, for it is not there. Then that is not the purpose of the Bible. Christians had their pattern long before there was the Bible as we know it and well before the New Testament scriptures were composed. Were they then without the pattern during the first few decades of Christianity?

If one wishes to say that the scriptures portray the Christian's pattern by their wonderful insights into the character of Jesus, his disciples, and his church, then we could not agree more. This is precisely what the New Testament scriptures are. They are the products of the efforts to live for Christ. Certainly the questions and problems that emerged in the primitive church are of untold value to us in our efforts to love and to serve Jesus better. Bur this is a far cry from saying that the scriptures themselves are the pattern. It is this ill found premise that lies behind all our notions that we have to understand the Bible alike and be right on everything in order to be united.

What is the criterion for the modern *ecclesia?* Jesus is the criterion. The modern church is to be made up of people who are conformed to the image of the Christ. He is to live in them and they in him. When Jesus ascended to the Father, the Holy Spirit began his mission on earth in the hearts of the saints. Since the Spirit is leading the saints of God, and since he directed and inspired the apostles in their preaching and writings, it definitely follows that the scriptures have *normative* value to the church. By *normative* we mean there are commands, examples, problems, questions, and instructions given to individuals and congregations in a variety of situations that tend to provide *a norm for procedure* for our own peculiar situations. I say "tend" because no two situations are ever the same. For

instance, Paul could have written *First Corinthians* only to the Corinthians and only at the time he did. That letter is not the pattern or even part of the pattern for any other congregation, either in Paul's time or our own. And yet that letter is "normative" in that it provides guidelines, for our own work and worship. For instance, the principle of mutual ministry in congregational worship is clearly delineated in *First Corinthians,* which could cause us to ask some questions about our practice of a one-man ministry, though mutual edification might find expression in a much different way than it did at Corinth.

When we take all the New Testament scriptures in this way, the norms multiply until we feel that we can be reasonably sure about a few matters regarding the work, worship and government of the *ecclesia.* This does not mean, however, that the scriptures provide us with "a minute and detailed pattern" for the church. For the most part the guidelines are in a few broad areas which seem to restrict the areas into which we might move instead of precisely defining them. The government of the church is an instance. The scriptural norms would direct us away from an ecclesiastical hierarchy or popery, but how strictly defined is the government of a congregation? The primitive congregations appear to be not quite the same in this respect. This is equally true of worship. It is so infantile of us to suppose that the worship in our churches are exact reproductions of the primitive churches, which probably were not the same to begin with. And yet there are normative guidelines for Christian worship.

So, in the context in which I have just written, I would say the scriptures are authoritative for the modern church, though far-very far-from being a handbook of minutia.

What do we envisage in the united church? We may write at length on this another time, but let us say here that the unity of the saints would not necessarily call for any substantial changes insofar as externals are concerned. The Baptist Church would not have to close shop, though being "Baptists" would come to mean less and less to them until finally they might choose to just forget about such terminology. The Methodists would probably continue worshiping at the Methodist Church, and the Presbyterians and Lutherans would not necessarily discard all marks that distinguish them from others. The Christian Church and the Church of Christ would not be expected to join each other, not at the outset at least.

But all these groups could still be as one in the holy bond of Christian brotherhood, despite the external differences and even the annoying disagreements. The big difference would be that they would accept each other as brothers and treat each other as children of God in the same heavenly family. And that would make all the difference in the world. They would drop all creedal barriers, basing fellowship upon the Lordship of Christ and nothing else. The "Church of Christ" brother might be unhappy if he worshipped where an organ is used, and he might with good reason think it to be wrong (at least for him), but he

would still cooperate with other Christians in those areas where conscience would permit, and he would of course accept all baptized believers as his brothers in Christ, dropping all the creedal barriers that the "Church of Christ" now has erected that keep Christians apart, whether it be on premillennialism, instrumental music, or cooperative enterprises.

We will all learn that we can be brothers together even when some of us believe that others of us are wrong about some things. We will learn that it is our love for the Christ that makes us brothers together, and that this is bigger than all the differences we can manufacture. And when that day comes we will be a united church even if we continue meeting in several different buildings in town. — *The Editor*

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

NEUROTIC GUILT IN THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Faulty religious concepts can be injurious, and this is why religion can crush the human soul as well as liberate it. A religion that creates the wrong kind of guilt is a case in point. To be sure, there is a necessary and genuine guilt, but there is also a false and unnecessary guilt, which we shall call *neurotic guilt.*

The right kind of guilt feeling is necessary to happiness and maturity, while the wrong kind leads only to misery. Jesus was careful to evoke only genuine guilt, which led to meaningful repentance and a continued life of self-improvement. The Pharisees, however, by way of false emphases and wrong concepts produced an abundance of neurotic guilt. They made people feel guilty for the wrong reasons. Even worse, they let the proud and arrogant feel that they were free of guilt. This is always the way of legalism: *those who should feel guilt the keenest bask in the false security of a self-assumed righteousness, while the less guilty are reprimanded for the slightest deviations.*

In order to understand neurotic guilt one must be able to see its underlying causes. Let us see how it works:

First, a sense of guilt is experienced when we fail in some cause with which we are identified. Failure suggests inferiority, which may take the form of guilt feeling. Feelings of inferiority and guilt are further intensified when a person is identified with an individual or group that is always accomplishing so little. This is especially true when the group, such as a congregation or an entire brotherhood, is so boastful of being right and scriptural and yet has to settle for a poverty of vision and results. When there is such a gulf between the claims made and the results realized, the sensitive soul is disheartened. He experiences feelings of futility, if not downright worthlessness. As for the insensitive and proud, they can go on in their blind stupidity, unaware that their perspective is narrow that they falsely equate sight with vision. Such ones always rationalize their failures.

Throughout our history as a brotherhood we have too often preached and practiced (or tried to) a system of legal, meritorious justification. We have not always been conscious of this, but we have nonetheless been guilty of legalism. And herein lies our difficulty, and herein lies the cause of neurotic guilt among us.

By *legal justification* we refer to the idea of an infallible interpretation of the Bible, along with an infallible knowledge and practice as necessary to salvation. People who think in terms of an infallible interpretation of the scriptures are slow to learn two important truths: (1) that *all* error is not necessarily sinful; (2) that all truths, while equally true, are not equally important.

The Church of Christ has stressed human achievement in attaining salvation, and as a consequence has virtually ignored the grace of God. We have even indulged in "playing God" in that we have taken so much upon ourselves. A man that can save himself does not need a Savior. This idea we have of meritorious dogmatic achievement practically dethrones God. We have a kind of "scoring test" on doctrinal issues that one must pass in order to be approved by "the general", and then by the herd and then perhaps by the Christ — and in that order! In terms of the larger brotherhood the doctrinal "exam" demands a 100 per cent passing grade, whether in terms of cups, classes, Herald of Truth, or what have you. The *moral* "exam" is a different matter, however, for one can be a cheat, or a drunkard, or a fornicator and still get along among our many congregations, who appear willing for moral issues to be taken care of at home. On *moral* matters we practice congregational autonomy! But when it comes to doctrinal issues the local churches certainly cannot "give their own exams and grade their own papers."

When it comes to "doctrinal soundness" and "conditions for fellowship" we are plenty rigid, but in matters of human decency and morality we are as loose as they come. We have replaced the grace of God with a system of works, and for integrity of life we have chosen a cheap morality. It is true that truth and accuracy are important, and we should be thankful for any truth we may have, but we are never justified in our arrogant claims of infallibility. This succeeds only in producing a grinning pride in some and a neurotic guilt in others.

"No man can justify himself before God by a perfect performance . . ." (Rom. 3:20 — Phillips) We should be able to breathe easier once we see that a "100 per cent ism" is not demanded. Paul goes on to ask, "What happens to human pride of achievement?" His reply is: "There is no room for it." Then he jolts us with: "The whole matter is on a different plane now, believing instead of achieving." (Rom. 3:27 — Phillips) This shifts both the emphasis and the principle of operation, for he asks: "Are we undermining law. . . Not at all. We simply place law in its proper place" (3:31).

It is here that the Church of Christ believes differently than Paul in that it teaches meritorious achievement in salvation, which no one can possibly attain, and which God would not accept if we could. This legalistic emphasis in the Church of Christ has produced untold disappointment, frustration, fighting, inferiority, and neurotic guilt. The harder we have tried to be right about everything the more has been our strife and division. And it will always be this way so long as we attempt to live by a meritorious legal system.

Why is this true? Because of the *law of reverse effect* which binds humanity as surely as does the law of gravity. The law of reverse effect asserts that when one desires to do a thing and continually finds himself unable to do it, the harder he tries the more impossible the task becomes.

Our idea of salvation by merit not only runs counter to the scriptural teaching of the grace of God, but it actually puts us in opposition to God. This is why our feelings of futility and guilt are manifold. The harder we try to live up to our distorted view of what is right, the more helpless and defeated we feel. Thus we have a brotherhood full of neurotic people who are afraid to live and scared to die. It is indeed pathetic!

Take for an example the boy who disobeys his father and then repents. He comes to his father for forgiveness, which is readily granted. The son makes more mistakes, coming to the father each time for forgiveness of his wrongs. In time the father shows instability and irritability, and gradually becomes unapproachable. It appears to the son as if the father now avoids him, moving back from him as he approaches. In the first encounters the son found the father approachable and helpful and easy to find; but now he appears faraway and difficult to find. This frustrates the son, making him feel guilty and resentful.

As the son intensifies his efforts to get through to his father, he only meets with further failure. The harder he tries the more difficult the task. This all adds up to neurosis, for “the harvest of conflict is neurosis.” God is either our full-time ally or a part-time enemy! God, of course, never backs away from us as a parent might a child, but a legalistic understanding of God’s dealings with man would make it so appear.

The Church of Christ has created a sort of “fireman’s ladder” which must be climbed for salvation. The rungs of the ladder include (1) infallible doctrinal interpretation, (2) exact items and acts of worship, (3) the rigidity which demands a 100%-ism and which is always stiffened by a quoting of “Whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all” (James 2:10), and (4) the exactitudes that run from compulsory Bible school attendance and handing out tracts on Head Coverings and Institutionalism to long lists of do’s and don’t’s, always backed up by the quoting of “To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” The way we use this verse it creates lots of neurotic guilt!

To further stress that the Christian life is a most trying and exasperating task we have greased the ladder. And so many of our people find themselves climbing four rungs of the ladder and sliding back six rungs. God becomes increasingly inaccessible. The Christian life becomes a grappling and grasping experience that has little hope of peace, poise, and power in the human soul. We will forever be on this merry-go-round of frustration unless some of our thinking changes. We must learn the meaning of the love of God and the place of mature trust. We must shift our emphasis of a "what we know and can do" to a "what God can do with us." Until that day comes we will forever be racing our motors, spinning our wheels and getting nowhere.

Our neurotic guilt is further evident in what we shall call *fault and concealment,* which constitutes a double burden. This is the case with those who know they should speak out on certain matters, but do not do so for fear of the brotherhood, concealing their true feelings. Preachers are especially suffering from this kind of repressed feelings of guilt. They realize that it is their duty to say what they truly believe, but they dare not, lest they be "cast out of the synagogue." Guilt feelings result.

We have all heard something like this: "While I wouldn't say this publicly, I will tell you. . ." Such ones are trying to operate with the brakes on. They are frustrated and nervous rather than free men. This explains why many are rising up against the "paralysis by analysis" of legalism. They are tired of being enslaved to a system that follows the herd instinct, ruled over by men who so often know far less than those they seek to control.

One important factor about all this is that *nothing is as powerful as an idea when its time has come.* Perhaps that hour has come.

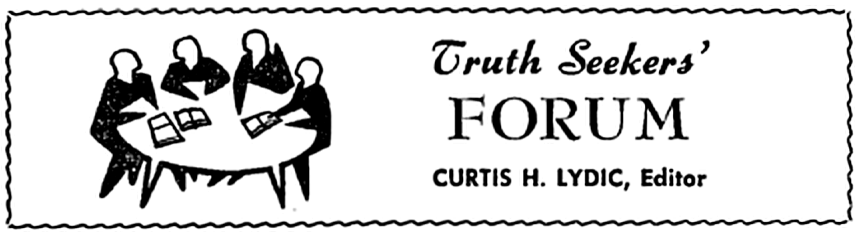
All that we have said points up one sober fact: neurotic guilt is caused by the failure to be oneself. The fear of the judgment of others keeps us from being ourselves. We must rise above this fear of others by realizing that we are responsible for what we do *not* say as well as for what we *do* say. To be free men we must speak out! The false self cries to us from within, "Conform, Conform." And yet there is the cry of the true self to be free and honest. So long as this conflict obtains there will be frustration, mental stagnation, and even spiritual infertility. These are the fruits of forced conformity within a forced religion.

Our brotherhood's bickerings have resulted in a poverty of love. Just as parental fussing causes children to feel unloved, so does the fussing among preachers cause people to feel further from God. This whole scene of Church of Christ people, who so badly need God's grace and love, but who appear unable to accept it and enjoy it, is a pathetic spectacle. — *The Editor*

(Adapted)

Certain it is that work, worry, labor and trouble, form the lot of almost all men their whole life long. But if all wishes were fulfilled as soon as they arose, how would men occupy their lives? What would they do with their time? If the world were a paradise of luxury and ease, a land flowing with milk and honey, where every Jack obtained his Jill at once and without any difficulty, men would either die of boredom or hang themselves; or there would be wars, massacres, and murders; so that in the end mankind would inflict more suffering on itself than it has now to accept at the hands of Naute. — Schopenhauer

⁂ ⁂ ⁂



AUTONOMY? WHERE?

Dear Forum Editor:

I have heard all my life that our congregations are autonomous. It is not clear to me what this is supposed to mean, but I've always understood it to mean that each church is free from all others. If this is so, then each church runs its own affairs without any pressures or railroading from any body outside that congregation.

What a sham and subterfuge this is! We are no more autonomous than a Methodist church with its ruling bishop or a Roman Catholic church with its pope. The main difference is that they are honest about it and we are not. They tell the truth and we lie. Excuse my French, but that's the way I see it. If we try something in our congregation that other Church of Christ congregations do not do, we may well have loyal preachers and loyal papers and loyal colleges all over us. Oh, no, they don't stay out of our affairs, saying "That is their business." They make our business their business, and if we don't do it the way the rest of the churches do it, then we are disloyal or anti, or something. Autonomy? Let some of your readers point to a truly self-governing congregation. — *One of your Truth Seekers*

WHERE THE BIBLE IS SILENT --?

Recently many of us have become painfully conscious of a discrepancy between preaching and practice with respect to the old slogan about "speaking where the Bible speaks and keeping silent where it is silent." Its use has been quite misleading, and it should be no surprise that many of our more sensitive religious neighbors have been either amused or offended because of it. I have heard some talk to the effect that this slogan should be dropped from use and forgotten; but it seems to me that this might be a case of throwing the baby out with the bath water. What is really wrong with the slogan? Doesn't it express the healthy idea of accepting the revelation of God as is, and not trying to invent doctrine where none is given in the scriptures?

Our mistake has been in misusing the slogan, and I believe that this is the result of a misunderstanding of its original meaning. The idea of keeping silent where the Bible is silent was meant originally as a self-imposed restriction, but a tradition has developed among us to use it as a discipline for others. Moreover, in applying the restriction we have changed its meaning. We have made "not speaking" mean "not practicing or promoting." I am curious about how we came by our sense of obligation to forbid those things about which the scriptures have nothing to say. By what logic have we concluded that *lack of mention* equals *lack of authorization* so that every thing left unmentioned is automatically prohibited?

As unreasonable as this theory seems to be, it might be much better respected if its proponents were at all consistent in its application, but the reverse is true. The fact is that each faction of us has its own quaint way of exploiting the silence of the scriptures to suit its doctrine. For example:

Faction A interprets Biblical silence on divided Bible classes as being prohibitive of same, but interprets Biblical silence on church ownership of property as indicating freedom for same. The question of Bible classes is considered a matter of faith and is an issue of fellowship, but the question of church ownership of property is a matter of opinion.

Faction B interprets Biblical silence on Bible classes as indicating freedom for same, but interprets Biblical silence on congregational cooperation as being prohibitive. The former is a matter of opinion; the latter a matter of faith, and just cause for division.

Faction C interprets Biblical silence on Bible classes, congregational cooperation, and church ownership of property as being an indication of freedom, but interprets Biblical silence on instrumental music as being prohibitive. The first named things are matters of opinion, but the latter is a matter of faith, and just cause for division.

Do you know of any party or person who uses the silence of the scripture consistently, one way or the other? Brethren, we need to make up our minds what to make of Biblical silence. If it prohibits, then let us abandon everything we now do and say, upon which the

scriptures say nothing — including divided classes, church buildings and parsonages, song books, black-boards, tuning forks and pitch pipes, etc. If scriptural silence really allows for the exercise of judgement, then let us try to be big enough to allow to others that liberty we so scrupulously defend for ourselves. Let us, to put it crudely, *shut up* in matters about which the New Testament is silent; and let those who judge that musical aids are expedient have their musical aids, and let those who believe that divided classes are expedient have their divided classes, and let those who see nothing wrong with church buildings have their church buildings, and let those who think it right to observe the Lord's Supper once every three months or every day do so, and so on and on. "Why do you judge your brother; it is before God that he stands or falls." Let these people serve God the best way they know how and leave it to God to accept or reject their service.

Some will shudder as this, and say, "Brother, this lets down the bars for all sorts of evil inventions." *What bars?* Where did the *bars* come from, if God didn't make them? And how can *we* judge men's inventions evil for *God's* purposes? Brother, what God hasn't revealed to you, you just don't know. Where is the seer, the prophet, the man with a special dispensation, who can show us the clear will of God in the long, unbroken silence of God's Word?

Everyone here will be able to enjoy your journal, for we are interested in restoring the church to the order of the New Testament. — *Washington*

I so look forward to each issue of *Restoration Review* that I would not want to miss any. — *California*

Please rush me all ten back numbers of *Restoration Review* for which I enclose $3.00. — *New York*

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

BOOK NOTES

M. F. Cottrell has published in mimeograph form the *Minutes of the Redstone Baptist Association,* which tell part of the important story of Alexander Campbell's Brush Run Church and the Baptist association that finally expelled them for heresy.

In his Foreword Cottrell says: "In reading these stained pages for the first time, the publisher was constantly reminded that as a whole the heirs of the Restoration Movement haven't dealt with their brethren any differently than the way we feel the Baptists dealt

with Campbell. Orthodoxy remains the same in every generation: bigoted, rigid, unbending, unreasonable and intolerant.

Not only can one read about the exclusion of the Brush Run Church, the first church of the Restoration Movement under the Campbells, which dates back to 1824, but there are also interesting references to other Baptists who added drama to the Movement. These include Mathias Luse, who immersed the Campbells, and S. M. Noel, who led the attack against Racoon Smith and Alexander Campbell among the Kentucky Baptists. Noel has a speech in the Minutes against those who are busy opposing creeds. It is unfortunate that some of this material is hardly readable, there is enough to it to justify the expenditure if one has any interest at all in the early history of our Movement.

You may order this material from us. The price is $2.00.

Helmut Thielicke is a German theologian who was forbidden to speak publicly during the Hitler regime because of his anti-Nazi sermons, but he continued to oppose Hitler through underground activity. He is presently at the university at Hamburg and is recognized as a leading conservative theologian. If you would like to be introduced to his thinking, we suggest a little book entitled *Out of the Depths*, which has a lot to say about death, along with several other subjects. The cost is only $2.50.

Ideal for reading to young children is *Egermeier's Bible Story Book.* There are 640 pages covering hundreds of short stories from both Testaments, richly illustrated. We are presently reading these to our own children, ages 4, 7 and 9, and find them highly satisfactory. We can give you a special price of $3.95 for this fine book, including postage. We have a few copies of *Hurlbut's Story of the Bible* that we'll offer for the same price, which is below list price.

If you want to flex your intellectual muscles, let us send you *The Faith of a Heretic* by Walter Kaufmann. He deals with such questions as What can I believe?, How should I live?, What do I hope? You'll not likely agree with the heretical Jew, but his is the kind of book we all ought to read. *Newsweek* said: "The case against organized religion has seldom been so cogently put." The paper edition is $1.60, including postage.

You may read this journal regularly for only $1.00 *per year. In clubs of six or more the rate is but* 50 *cents per name.*

We depend on you. Why not send a list of new readers at once. The June issue will contain several articles that should challenge your thinking.

Back issues are available at the rate of ten cents each for monthly numbers; the older quarterly numbers: 3 *for $1.00.*

RESTORATION REVIEW, 1201 Windsor Dr., Denton, Texas.*

* Current Contact Information:
Leroy Garrett, 1300 Woodlake Drive, Denton, TX 76205
leroy.ouida@worldnet.att.net

⁂ ⁂ ⁂

RESTORATION REVIEW is published monthly (except July and August) at 1201 Windsor Dr., Denton, Texas. Leroy Garrett, Editor. Second class permit at Denton, Texas. Subscription rate is $1.00 per annum; 50 cents in clubs of 6 or more.

Address all mail to: 1201 Windsor Drive, Denton, Texas 76201.*